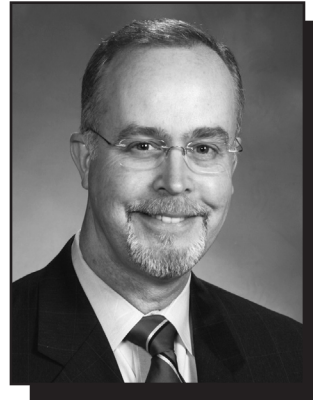




From the desk of
Representative Jim Moeller

Winter 2008



Dear Neighbor:

Yes, it's that time of year again. No sooner are the holiday trinkets put away then our state Legislature must be gaveled back into session! **Please know that I'm grateful for the continued honor of representing our communities in Olympia.**

Today's report covers major issues I'm tracking in our 2008 session. One big new responsibility for me is that I was quite honored to be elected by my colleagues to serve as Deputy Speaker Pro Tempore in the House of Representatives. I look forward to helping keep the governmental wheels turning in the right direction.

As always, I ask that you stay in touch with me when you have comments or questions about what's going on in your state government. You pay for it – and you certainly have a right to a big say-so in it.

Thank you again – and best wishes for a good new year,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Jim Moeller".

Jim Moeller
State Representative
49th Legislative District
693-0804 (local phone number)



✓ Internet Security:

Private information must be kept out of the hands (and computers) of 21st-century scofflaws

One thing I've learned since I've been in the Legislature is that some of the best ideas for new laws and policies come from private citizens. That's why it's very appropriate and important that our Evergreen State maintains our "citizen Legislature" – to make sure we spend most of our time in the real world outside the state capital. **Frankly, people engaged in the challenge and encounter of everyday life have the best handle on what's really going on.**

Such is certainly the case with an issue I'm focusing on in the 2008 session. **A 49th Legislative District citizen brought the very timely matter of Internet security to my attention. He's been very involved in shaping legislation ever since he first called my office.**

We need much better security for our private information to make sure it isn't transmitted all over the Web before we even know it's happening.

The proposed legislation would ban a person or business in the state of Washington from transferring personal data electronically (by means other than a fax) to a person outside the secure system – unless a process called encryption is used. By personal data, I mean your name, Social Security number, and driver's license number. I'm also talking about your bank-account number or credit/debit card number, if it is given with any required security code, access code, or password that permits access to your account. **This policy will be a very good tool to ensure the security of personal information.**



✓ Consumers:

Homeowners, not to mention honest contractors, would see protection in legislation

Consumer protection will be another key issue for me in the 2008 legislative session. Specifically, I'm resuming the drive for a plan to require plumbing, electrical, and conveyance workers to have licenses, certificates, or permits in their possession while they're working. This gives homeowners and business owners good and appropriate protection against untrained and unlicensed repair people.

The idea is to protect consumers – and to protect aboveboard contractors – by helping put a stop to the contractors who aren't aboveboard. My legislation wouldn't require that contractors wear their licenses or certificates if it would be hazardous to do so on their particular job. To be sure, as long as they can show evidence that they do, in fact, have the appropriate credentials and the right certification for the job, they wouldn't have to wear the verification if it would get in the way or be hazardous.

The proposal would help eliminate the unsafe and unfair underground-construction industry going on right now in the state of Washington.



✓ **Vulnerable Adults:**

Continuing work to strengthen our guidelines protecting vulnerable adults

Also in this year's Legislature, we'll keep up our mission to build stronger protection from abuse that is happening to vulnerable adults. I want to further streamline the process that a citizen or citizens must go through to obtain a protection order for these folks. It has been my good fortune and pleasure to continue working with the Clark County Vulnerable Adult Task Force on the writing of stronger laws in this vital area.

The hard work of the task force led to legislation I sponsored in the 2007 session. We approved a new law last year helping ensure peace-of-mind for men and women at-risk of abuse and exploitation. This new measure makes the Adult Protection Act easier to enforce.

We absolutely must put a stop to ill-treatment of vulnerable citizens, including elderly men and women who rely on others for their basic needs.



✓ **Property Taxes:**

It's time for a comprehensive look at reforming our state's policies

The governor called us to Olympia late last November for a very brief special session to review two bills involving property taxes. Her action came on the heels of the state Supreme Court's overturning of Initiative 747, which had set a limit on property-tax hikes. The main bill we approved will reinstate the one-percent cap on property-tax increases. The other measure will broaden the property-tax-deferral program.

Many citizens have seen spikes in the assessed value of their property. I voted in the special session to support reinstatement of the cap on property-tax hikes. But I look forward to pursuing a more thorough course for tax relief in the 2008 regular session. I'm encouraged that the governor is also committed to pursuing a sincere, serious look at comprehensive tax reform.

The other bill passed in the special session expands the existing property-tax deferral so that Washington homeowners earning up to \$57,000 a year can benefit from it. This dollar amount is roughly the current median-family income in our state. Terms of the deferral legislation direct that eligible homeowners could postpone up to 50 percent of their annual property-tax bill.

I mentioned above the comprehensive review of property-tax reform in the 2008 session. In addition to that work, I'm also prime-sponsoring legislation to expand participation in the property-tax-exemption program for senior citizens and disabled citizens. My bill would expand the program so that folks who are registered domestic partners and who are a surviving partner of a participant in the exemption program can qualify for assistance in the program. To be eligible, you would need to be at least 57-years-old and meet the same additional requirements as citizens who are participating in the program right now.



✓ Furthermore:

*A simple form tells medical people
what you want done in an emergency*

Here's a topic you can toss out on the ol' discussion table when there's a lull at your next social get-together. It's a topic guaranteed to send your *soiree* mates scrambling in the other direction. (And, true, it's a topic that just might keep you from getting invited to any more get-togethers or *soirees*!) I speak of end-of-life issues. **Unpleasant though the subject is, people should at least talk about it long enough to make some decisions before it's too late – way too late.**

I'm referring to POLST forms – *a physician order for life-sustaining treatment*. I've been working with a group of medical professionals, nursing-home directors, and hospital people to find ways to make it easier to honor an individual's final wishes. My legislation expands protection from liability to **all** health-care personnel endeavoring to follow a valid POLST form in good faith. (Currently, only emergency-medical personnel are protected.)

The POLST form documents a person's treatment preferences in a health-care setting. The form could say "do not resuscitate," or it could say provide only "comfort care," or it could spell out some other choice for emergency-medical treatment. It would need to be signed by both the patient and his or her doctor to be valid. POLST forms are available online at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/livingwill/polst.htm>.

The Advanced Medical Directives Registry, by the way, is up and running. Click on www.doh.wa.gov/livingwill for more information.



✓ Town Hall: *Won't you please drop by our 49th District meetings?*

Frequently throughout the year, Representative Bill Fromhold, Senator Craig Pridemore and I host Town Hall meetings in the district. I hope you had a chance to attend our recent Town Hall in Vancouver. We have another one coming up on Saturday, February 23. We haven't set the specific details yet for time and place, but call my office, or check any of our Web sites in a couple of weeks. Hope to see you!

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Representative Jim Moeller

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Representative
Jim Moeller
305 John L. O'Brien Bldg.
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600